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THE LIFE OF
ST. ANTONY OF PADUA

The Life of
St. Antony of Padua
Antonio de Padova, Saint, 1195-1231.
= BY *Legend*
JEAN RIGAUD

FRIAR MINOR AND BISHOP OF TRÉGUIER

First published with a French translation, by
FR. FERDINAND-MARIE D'ARAULES
OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

and now translated into English by
AN ENGLISH FRANCISCAN

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69 SOUTHWARK BRIDGE ROAD, S.E.

1904

THIS translation, by an English Franciscan, was published in the *Franciscan Monthly*, and is edited by Father Andrew Egan, O.F.M., who has contributed a prefatory note.

PREFATORY NOTE TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION

THE Life of St. Antony of Padua, which I have the privilege to edit, is a translation of a manuscript recently brought to light in the Municipal Library of Bordeaux by Père Ferdinand-Marie d'Araules, O.F.M., which manuscript, bearing now the number 270, formerly belonged to the Convent of Cordeliers in that city.

The discovery of it is largely due to the scientific method initiated a few years ago by certain savants, who, breaking through the routine which until then had paralyzed all original research, successfully endeavoured to wrest the true historical data of St. Antony's life from the obscurity which for centuries had concealed them. The impulse thus given promises to produce a revival of enthusiasm in regard to St. Francis's first-born similar to that for the Seraphic Father himself.

Referring to the present Life of St. Antony, an authority on Franciscan lore, Monsieur Léon de Kerval, says: "The

method of rational criticism applied at last to questions bearing on St. Antony's Life could not fail to have the happiest results as to all that concerns the sources of the history of the Franciscan 'Thaumaturgus.' Indeed, the discovery and the identification of documents have not been long delayed—witness the unexpected discovery of the Legend of Jean Rigauld, a most interesting document."

Until our times, Antonian hagiography was often a theme of speculation and guess-work. A thoroughly critical edition of primitive documents was called for, and this may now be said to be complete. In conjunction with the third volume for June of the Bollandists' great work, *Acta Sanctorum*, and the *Vitæ duæ Sancti Antonii*, edited by M. Léon de Kerval, the present work forms the basis of a solid and permanent construction—the foundation of a definite bibliography of the "Saint of Miracles."

It was precisely this title of "Saint of Miracles" which defeated every attempt to obtain an accurate and circumstantial description of St. Antony's life, for his very popularity ended by obscuring his personality. It is a matter of common knowledge that in order to keep pace with the constantly increasing demand for the miraculous, insisted on by his clients, St. Antony's biographers of the Middle Ages, such a

Pacheco, Angelico da Vicenza, Luigi da Messaglia—even Wadding later on—overlooking the historical features of his life, devoted themselves to the comparatively easy task of handing down to posterity accounts of miracles (often apocryphal), attributed to his intercession. To-day, notwithstanding the marked improvement visible in this respect in the biographies of St. Antony by Abbé Guyard, Abbé Bonnelye, Père Servatius Dirks, O.F.M., Père Bloudelet, O.F.M., Père Léopold de Chérancé, O.S.F.C., Mgr. Ricard, these Lives are still far from satisfactory. It is, however, only just to single out for honourable exception the noteworthy articles of Dr. Edward Lempp, in the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, and the correct and erudite monograph by M. le Chanoine Lepitre.

To many this scientific treatment of our subject will seem undesirable, and we remember well the storm raised in certain quarters, when the last-mentioned monograph appeared. There are those who would leave traditions, however doubtful, undisturbed, but this is neither an honest nor a prudent course to pursue. The counterfeit will sooner or later be discovered, and the result will be to throw discredit on tradition as a whole. But Truth is great, and it will prevail.

A. E.

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INTRODUCTION

THE manuscript, of which an English translation is now published, is of great interest and of sovereign importance, in view of the critical history of the Franciscan Thaumaturgus. Hitherto, indeed, the scarcity of primitive documents concerning St. Antony has been extreme. Owing to the unpardonable carelessness with which Francis of Gonzaga bitterly reproaches the Religious of Padua ; still more to the internal divisions which had agitated the Seraphic Order for nearly three centuries, and during which the abettors of laxity waged desperate war against all ancient manuscripts and all simple but too veracious biographies ; owing, finally, to the wars and revolutions which have so frequently pillaged the archives, and destroyed the libraries of our Convents, scarcely anything original or complete about St. Antony has been handed down to us.

We preface the Life by a short account of the sources of Antonian history, as they are seen by the hagiographer and critic.

First Legend of St. Antony

BY THOMAS DE CELANO

A. EDITIONS AND MANUSCRIPTS. In 1856, the Academy of Science in Lisbon published, in its collection of *Monumenta Portugallie historica*, a life of the Franciscan Thaumaturgus, drawn from Manuscripts 286 and 293 of the Monastery of Alcobaza. New editions of this same life have been brought out in 1883, by the Rev. Father Josa, Conventual, from Manuscript 74 of the Antonian library of Padua; and in 1890, by the Rev. Father Hilaire, Capuchin, from a Manuscript of Lucerne.

B. ITS ANTIQUITY. If Père Josa is to be believed, the sermons of Blessed Luc Belludi, and those of another Luc, of Padua, who died in 1272, contain many quotations from this Legend. Again, no account is given of the translation of the relics made by St. Bonaventura in 1263; the Legend must, therefore, be anterior to that date. It is, indeed, very much more ancient.

As we shall prove farther on, the Legend hitherto known as *Vita auctore anonymo valde antiquo*, of which Julien de Spire is the author, was certainly written before 1249, probably even before 1240; but if we compare it with the Portuguese, Italian, Swiss, French, and English manuscripts taken from

this First Legend, we observe that while it grounds its recital on the testimony of "grave men worthy of belief," and bears all the marks of a true primitive document, Julien de Spire, on the contrary, is content with recasting and touching up his predecessor; he even quotes him once.

C. ITS AUTHOR. As has been observed by its Portuguese editors, it is evidently the work of an Italian Friar Minor, though hitherto the name of the author has never been discovered.

Important material might have been found for solving this question, by comparing the primitive Legend of St. Antony with the hagiographical works of Celano, particularly with his *Vita Prima*, of St. Francis. It would at once be seen that this anonymous Legend bears the stamp, so to speak, of the biography of the Patriarch of Assisi.

1. If we are not mistaken, the prologue of the Legend, especially, presents the characteristics of the method and style of Celano.

(a) St. Antony's biographer begins with a declaration of the *motives* which have induced him to write; Celano is careful to make this remark each time he writes.

(b) He then goes on to tell us the basis upon which he grounds his history: he has himself been witness to certain facts; the

Bishop of Lisbon, Soiero, has informed him of others ; and other Catholics have made known to him the rest. Celano usually gives us the same information as to the sources from which he draws.

(c) The author of the Antonian Legend concludes his Prologue with the expressions of anxiety and apprehension which are so frequently met with in Celano's writings.

(d) Again, the programme is drawn up in terms peculiar to Thomas of Celano.

(e) The author of this first Legend of St. Antony divides his work in exactly the same way that Celano divides his *Vita Prima*.

(f) Finally, the Antonian biography makes use of the very same expressions and figures of speech as are found in the *Vita Prima* of St. Francis.

2. Not only in the first part, where chronological order is observed, but in other places also, the Legend of St. Antony and the *Vita Prima* of Celano bear a striking resemblance to one another. For instance, the Prologue and Epilogue to the second parts of both are almost identical. Moreover, the account of the death and canonization of St. Antony presents the same peculiarities of style as that of the death and canonization of St. Francis.

We might quote many passages ; but we have said enough, surely, to prove that the author of this first Legend of St. Antony

thought like Celano, arranged his facts like Celano, wrote like Celano. Does not this suggest that he who wrote so well about St. Francis and St. Clare, devoted his talent and piety also, to honour the Saint of Miracles? Celano was, undoubtedly, the official hagiographer of the Order.

Second Legend of St. Antony

BY JULIEN DE SPIRE

A. EDITIONS AND MANUSCRIPTS. The second Legend of St. Antony was published by the Bollandists in 1698, in the XXIII volume of the *Acta Sanctorum*, June 13th, under the title of *Vita auctore anonymo valde antiquo*. Besides the manuscript in their hands, they knew of several other copies of this Legend. Some of these are to be found at present in the National Library of Paris, and in the Brussels Library.

B. ITS ANTIQUITY. This Legend is not of the fifteenth century, as the Capuchin Father Hilaire imagined, but of the early part of the thirteenth. It was written earlier than 1264, because Vincent de Beauvais, who died that year, quotes long extracts from it in his XXXI book of *Speculum Historiale*. It was written before 1249, because the office of St. Antony,

taken word for word from this Legend, was in use in the Order earlier than that year. We believe it to have been of even earlier date than 1240, and to have been written by Julien de Spire, with the Office, about the same time that he drew up his other works on our Seraphic Father.

Another reason strongly inclines us to adopt this last date: the Legend of Julien de Spire, as well as that of Thomas of Celano, tells scarcely anything about the most important part of St. Antony's life—his public ministry from his ordination at Forli till the General Chapter in 1230. Why this marked silence about his offices of Lector, of Guardian, of Custodian, and of Provincial? There appears to be only one reason to be given for so unfortunate a hiatus, namely, the extreme difficulty that there was at that time, from 1232 to 1239, under the generalship of Brother Elias, to bring to light the antagonism that existed between Antony and that abettor of laxity—an antagonism which was declared and affirmed by Eccleston in his *De adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, written about the year 1260.

C. ITS AUTHOR. Julien de Spire is the author of the second Legend of St. Antony. This is a point which has hitherto escaped observation, and a few words on the subject may not be without interest.

Jourdain de Giano, Barthélemy of Pisa,

and others, inform us that Julien de Spire composed the ancient Office of St. Antony as it is found in the Breviary of the Friars Minor, and a Life of St. Antony at the same time. Now if we compare the said Office, which has been in use ever since the first half of the thirteenth century, with the *Vita auctore anonymo*, discovered and brought out by the Bollandists, we shall find that all the Responses, as well as the Antiphon to the Benedictus, are taken from this *Vita* almost word for word. Therefore, undoubtedly, the *Vita* of the *Acta Sanctorum* is the very same that the chroniclers assure us was written by the author of the Office, Julien de Spire.

That Julien de Spire drew his Responses from his own Legend, we can prove by a similar instance. We learn from the chroniclers mentioned above, that he had done for St. Francis what he afterwards did for St. Antony. He wrote an Office and a Legend of the Seraphic Father. The Office has always been religiously preserved in the Order of Friars Minor, but the Legend was supposed to be lost. However, by comparing the liturgical parts with the historical, as we have been doing in the case of the Thaumaturgus of Padua, we have lately discovered this Legend of the *Poverello* by Friar Julien, in a biography of the thirteenth century.

Third Legend of St. Antony

BY PIERRE RAYMUND DE SAINT-ROMAIN

THE THIRD LEGEND of St. Antony known to us, was edited in 1883 by the R. P. Josa, a Conventual, according to the primitive Legend, which was written shortly after 1293.

Unhappily, it is incomplete; the part treating of the miracles is missing, and we are thereby deprived probably of circumstantial and personal details which would have enabled us to identify the author with greater certainty. We may conjecture, however, from certain passages in the Legend of Jean Rigauld, that the author of this third Legend is the Peter Raymund, Lector at Padua, of whom he speaks.

Other Antonian Documents of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

The various documents already mentioned, and a few short notices of the Saint by Barthélemy de Trente, Muratori, and others, which pass over in silence all the acts of the Saint from his preaching at Forli where his learning was first made known, to his return to Padua a few months before his death, are

all that the thirteenth century has hitherto bequeathed to us of St. Antony of Padua.

The fourteenth century gave us the *Fiorretti*, which relates his preaching to the fish, and his sermon before the Papal Court ; the *Liber Conformitatum*, by Barthélemy of Pisa, containing a short biography of the Saint ; and the *Liber Miraculorum*.

This last (dated 1367) was written one hundred and fifty years later than the event it mentions, and contains, besides, some evident mistakes. Yet it is the only source from which writers of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries have drawn their information about the most important and characteristic part of the Franciscan Apostle's life, namely, his acts and labours in France.

We must hasten to explain that the incidents related in the *Liber Miraculorum* are far from being a tissue of fables and untruths. They are sometimes reproductions and summaries, at others amplifications more or less faithful, more or less legendary, of ancient narratives. But it is none the less true that, owing to the absence of primitive testimony, all reliance on the veracity of the *Liber Miraculorum* was impossible. The facts it affirmed, without proof or guarantee, were devoid of solid foundation, and were open, therefore, to the suspicion of critics.

Hence it is that rationalists, and even

some Catholic historians, have not hesitated to say that—except in general outline—the life of St. Antony, as represented by modern biographers, is legendary and without any historical foundation.

Instead of regretting the severity of present literary requirements, would it not have been wiser to try to recover from dust and oblivion some such documents as are alone thought worthy of attention and consideration by the learned of the present day? This was our idea, and our efforts have in a great measure been crowned with success.

The discovery of the *Legend of Jean de Rigauld*, of which a translation is here presented, fills up one of the principal gaps in the source of Antonian history, especially by giving us the primitive and authentic account of certain miracles inserted in the *Liber Miraculorum*. From this point of view, it appears to us a most important event. This will further be shown by what will be said of its author, the date of its composition, and its intrinsic value.

Fourth Legend of St. Antony

BY JEAN RIGAUD

A. THE AUTHOR OF THE FOURTH
LEGEND of St. Antony is the Friar Minor

Jean Rigauld of Limousin. The superscription of MS. 270, of the Library of Bordeaux, leaves no doubt on this head: "*Incipit Vita B. Antonii de Ordine Fratrum Minorum, a Fratre Joanne Rigaldi, de eodem Ordine, ordinata.*"

It is true that neither Sbaralea, nor Wadding, in *Scriptores Ordinis Minorum*, nor, before them, Rodolphe de Tossignano, in his biography of Saint Antony, speak of Jean Rigauld as having written a history of the Franciscan Thaumaturgus. Still we have important testimony elsewhere, by another Limousin chronicler — Bernard Guy (Bernardus Guidonis), who wrote in the beginning of the fourteenth century. In his *Speculum Sanctorale*, he quotes our hagiographer in these words: "*Ea, quae sequuntur, de Sancto Antonio, excepimus sub compendio ex Legenda quam conscripsit religiosus vir, Frater Joannes Rigaldi, Lemovicensis diocesis, postmodum episcopus Trecorensis.*"

Few biographical details have been discovered concerning Jean Rigauld. We see, from the above, that he belonged to the diocese of Limoges. In what year he was born, or when he entered the Order of Friars Minor, we know not. He was made Penitentiary of the Holy See, and afterwards Bishop of Tréguier, in 1317. Wadding gives the Pontifical Bull by which John XXII raised him to that dignity. Accord-

ing to the Gallia Christiana, he died at Rome, in 1323.

B. DATE OF HIS WRITING. He wrote his Legend during the last years of the thirteenth century, or the first years of the fourteenth. The latest date he mentions is 1293: "Anno Domini 1293, Frater Petrus Raymundi . . . quaedam miracula recollegit." His account ends with this date; he says nothing, for instance, about the miracle of the Lateran mosaic which took place, according to the *Liber Miraculorum*, in the time of Boniface VIII, that is to say, between 1294 and 1303; and which, had he written later, would naturally have found its place in the last paragraph of his last chapter: *De Sanctum inhonorantibus*.

C. ITS IMPORTANCE. The value and intrinsic importance of his account result: (1) From the means of information he made use of; (2) the new views and ideas he presents to us.

1. His means of information.

He drew partly from earlier biographies and documents. More especially he had a Legend before his eyes, the gaps of which he declared, in his prologue, his intention of filling up: "*Quae in Vita ejus inserta non reperi . . . illa volui ordinare.*" It cannot be doubted that this was no other than that of Julien de Spire, the *Vita auctore anonymo*, published by the Bollandists. In the

1290
from
Spire press
to 1240

first four chapters of his work, and above all in the ninth, he follows it constantly, and almost word for word. We may conclude, therefore, that the other Legend was known to him, which comprises the manuscripts of Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, France, and London. In any case, none of them can have furnished him with any information further than of the early days of the Saint, and of his death.

He had besides, at his disposal, various accounts of miracles ; especially the one drawn up in 1293, by Friar Peter Raymund of St. Romain, Lector at Padua, and afterwards Provincial Minister of Aquitaine. He also quotes, now and then, the Liturgical office composed in honour of the Thaumaturgus, in the thirteenth century ; thrice, he expressly quotes from it, in connection with certain facts.

But his most usual, and apparently most abundant, source of information, is the testimony of those who had lived with St. Antony, or who had been witnesses of his actions. He tells us that he was careful to question several, of whose veracity and intelligence he was certain (*"quae a principio,"* etc.): "Which were told me by many Friars of tried virtue, as certainly true, when I entered the Order ;" and in another place (*"multi adhuc fratres vivebant,"* etc.): "When I entered the Order, many Friars who had

been present at this sermon were still living; their testimony is worthy of entire belief, for they bore witness to what they had actually seen and heard."

Sometimes he gives the names of those from whom he heard such and such a story: "*Sicut a Custode Sancti Jacobi didici.*" "*Quod certa relatione Fratris Petri de Pomarada didici;*" and so on.

Contrary to most hagiographers of the Middle Ages, who do not trouble themselves to state precisely the time and place of the events they relate, Jean Rigauld specifies with jealous care—or rather with geographical exactness—the countries, the towns, the very spots in which the facts occurred. Such a thing, he remarks, happened in Italy, such another in France—at Bourges, at Brive, at St. Junien, at Limoges, in the Church of St. Pierre-du-Queyroix, at the Creux-des-Arènes, etc., etc.

In these two points, of criticism and of exactness, his work is—with regard to the period at which he wrote—extremely and exceptionally remarkable.

2. The new views and ideas he presents to us.

His Legend is not merely, like the *Liber Miraculorum*, a more or less crude collection of prodigies; it is a real biography, drawn up on a methodical and rational plan, with a view to make known to us the inmost

spirit of the Saint, and his virtues, as well as his actions and labours. This will easily be seen by looking at the headings of his chapters: "Of his Life in the World; his Life among the Canons Regular; his joining the Order of Friars Minor; his going to the Infidels; his Humility; his Deep Poverty; his Prayer; his Preaching and Miracles; his Death and Canonization;" etc., etc. And whilst earlier Legends, incomplete and out of proportion as they are, only give the details of the first part of the Saint's life and of his death and burial, Jean Rigauld's work embraces the whole of his history, dwelling particularly on those events that distinguished his abode in France.

The facts related by the future Bishop of Tréguier manifestly surpass the narratives of the close of the fourteenth century in sincerity, in simplicity, and in probability. It would be interesting to study the *amplification*, not to say the *deformation*, that many of them have undergone in their passage into the *Liber Miraculorum*, of which they form so considerable a part.

It would be foreign to the object of this work to study Jean Rigauld's Legend from a literary point of view. Suffice it to say that even in this regard it is by no means devoid of merit. Doubtless our ancient hagiographer has some of the faults of his time. As was usual in those days, he makes use of

singular metaphors; for instance, in the third chapter, he compares St. Antony, thirsting for martyrdom, to a horse, or an elephant excited by the sight of blood. He explains and comments on proper names, making a play upon words that many readers might consider frivolous. Yet his style is not only elegant, but brilliant. Poetry and enthusiasm breathe throughout his pages. He depicts the Saint, the Apostle, the Thaumaturgus, as resplendent with grace and strength, filled with an austere and superhuman beauty.

There is only one thing more to mention : the Legend of Jean Rigauld has never been published until now.

Some years since (1880) the Abbé Arbelot, quoting for the first time certain passages of Bernard Guy, whose *Speculum Sanctarale* has likewise remained in manuscript, notices the mention made by him of our biographer : "*Ea, quae sequuntur, de Sancto Antonio, excepiimus sub compendio ex Legenda quam conscripsit religiosus vir, Frater Joannes Rigaldi.*" But he does not appear to have entertained the least idea of searching for this work of Jean Rigauld.

Father Leopold, a Capuchin, in his later pamphlet on St. Antony, after speaking of the Legend concerning the early years and the death of the Thaumaturgus, which Legend, he, as well as Father Hilaire, but

without the slightest proof, attributes to John of Peckham, continues thus : "It is, unfortunately, the only document that has escaped the ravages of time ; unless we give it, as complement, the Chronicle of Jean Rigauld, the *Liber Miraculorum*, the Franciscan Liturgy, and the Writings of the Saint. Jean Rigauld, a Cordelier of Limousin, who died Bishop of Tréguier, belongs to the thirteenth century. His chronicle, *hitherto unpublished*, contains four splendid miracles, which M. l'Abbé Arbellot has inserted in his notice of St. Antony in Limousin, namely, an act of bilocation, the miraculous wine, the diabolic phantasmagoria, and the withholding of rain."

Neither the Abbé Arbellot, nor Father Léopold, knew or suspected the existence of the manuscript in the Library of Bordeaux.

This manuscript, which came originally from the ancient Convent of Cordeliers in the same city, bears the number 270. Its date is, we believe, of the fourteenth century ; the official catalogue of manuscripts in this library, printed in 1894, assigns this date to it.

May its publication incite the learned to fresh research !

THE LIFE OF BLESSED ANTONY

At the time when God began to enlighten the world by the teaching and example of St. Francis, the standard-bearer of Christ, there was a certain man of holy life whose virtues and power have made him famous. He bore first, among the Canons Regular, the name of Ferdinand, which had been given him in Baptism ; but after embracing the Rule of the Friars Minor he was called Antony. In both these states, as will be seen by a perusal of his life, God poured forth on his soul an abundance of grace.

During his sojourn in the Province of Limousin, of which he was appointed Custodian during his life, he worked, by the mercy of our Lord, certain notable miracles, which were related to me by many Friars of tried virtue as certainly true, when I entered the Order. Not finding them inserted in his life, I intend to write them down. It is not from presumption that I do so, but from love of the Saint. If they are not collected, it is to be feared that they will fall into oblivion when the recollection fades from the memory

of the Friars. May their recital stir up in every heart a greater devotion to the Saint !

That every statement may be more easily found in its right place, I have divided this history into ten little sections or chapters :—

First, therefore, I will relate the kind of life he led in the world. Secondly, his life among the Canons Regular. Thirdly, the cause and motive which led him to enter the Order of Friars Minor. Fourthly, his change of name, and how he went to the land of the Infidels. Fifthly, his admirable humility, and the condescension shown to the least desire of his. Sixthly, his great poverty, and the marvellous way in which God provided for his wants. Seventhly, his sublime prayer, and how God granted him all he asked. Eighthly, his famous preaching, and how he had the gift of miracles. Ninthly, his death and canonization, or inscription in the catalogue of the Saints. Tenthly, the miracles worked after his glorious death.

CHAPTER I

OF HIS LIFE IN THE WORLD

IT is well known that Blessed Antony shone in the world "like the morning star in the midst of clouds." In accordance with the truth that a tree may be known by its fruits, and a plant by its root, he had, like St. John the Baptist, parents who were just before God and scrupulous observers of His commandments. They had not yet had a son and were still in the flower of their youth when they gave birth to the Saint.

The very names of the places in which he was born, grew up, and studied, were in themselves omens of the virtues and future greatness of the child. The country was called Portugal,¹ and does not that seem to signify that he was destined to bear (*portare*) and show forth to all the cock (*gallum*), future herald of the holy Gospel? The town where he was born, grew up, and studied,

¹ The play of words of the Latin text is not easy to translate : *Portugallia, portansgallum ; Ulixbona, Ulixem bonitatis.*

was Lisbon, which was to give a second Ulysses to the world, of unheard-of wisdom and prudence, for whom the good Jesus would be a model and mirror of a perfect goodness.

The knowledge of the Holy Scriptures was acquired at the Church of the Blessed Virgin, in the same town, at no great distance from his home. Happy Ferdinand! From his earliest years he had the holy Mother of God for his mistress and instructress, and, as we shall see, for his powerful protectress during his life and at the hour of death.

In spite of the deceitful and fleeting pleasures of the world which spread their attractions before him, he never gave way to his passions, but, by leading a virtuous life and seeking only how he might please God, he sought diligently to realize the words of the wise man: "I was a sensible child and had received a wise soul, and whereas I was more good I came to a body undefiled."

CHAPTER II

OF HIS LIFE AND PROGRESS IN LEARNING WITH THE CANONS REGULAR

AT the sight of so many souls in the world who followed the dangerous course of their passions, he understood that all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and of the eyes, or the pride of life ; nor did he forget that this world and its pleasures pass quickly away. So that after spending his childhood, like the Patriarch Jacob, in simplicity under the paternal roof, he resolved to quit the arid plains as well as the flowers of this world, to embrace a higher life.

Recalling to mind that one must "hate father and mother" to take service with Christ, he left his father and mother, and gave up all right to inherit from them. He then went to a Monastery of Canons Regular in the neighbourhood of Lisbon, received the habit there, and there made his first vows under the Rule of St. Austin.

It was fitting that one who burned with an ardent desire of attaining to the highest degree of perfect wisdom, should be first

moulded in the school of Blessed Austin, and, under his care, begin to taste how sweet the Lord is. It was right that this learned Father should glory in a son as learned as Antony.

But, because the frequent visits of his relations and friends hindered him from obtaining the peace and calm of soul which he so much desired, he wished, like another Abraham, to go forth out of his country and from his kindred. It was not without difficulty that he obtained permission from his Superior, for he was beloved by all on account of his great sanctity and amiability.

He then went to the Convent of the Holy Cross at Coïmbra, another monastery of the same Order, where he was soon known to be a follower after perfection and interior peace, and a zealous lover of the Cross. There, truly, he advanced rapidly in religious perfection and holiness ; there also, thanks to the inspirations of Him who teaches independently of time or duration, he armed himself with the most solid teaching of the Fathers, so as to preach to heretics later on, and to defend the holy truths of the Faith against their attacks.

This light received from God, who had chosen him and for whom he had left all, was so great, that henceforth his memory served him in the place of books, and he was presently filled with the Spirit of Wisdom.

CHAPTER III

OF THE CAUSE AND MOTIVE WHICH LED HIM TO ENTER THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

BUT at that very time, when Blessed Francis was illuminating the world, like the rising of another sun, by his life and doctrine ; when his new Order, casting off the old man, presented to the world the sight of the new man, and spread around everywhere the sweet odour of its virtues, many of the Friars Minor, glowing with a thirst for martyrdom, journeyed towards the pagan shores, in the hope of either bringing these fierce infidels under the yoke of the Faith, or of obtaining for love of Christ who died for us the palm of martyrdom which they so ardently desired.

Some of them came to Morocco, and like valiant athletes, publicly preached the Faith of Christ ; they were soon struck down by the sword of the infidels, and thus gloriously shed their blood for Jesus Christ. A great and powerful prince, the Infante Don Pedro, then made known all over Spain the in-

comparable felicity of these Saints, and the wonderful miracles the King of Martyrs had worked during their glorious triumph. He brought back with him their holy relics, and affirmed that through their merits he had been preserved from great dangers.

The rumour that was spread everywhere of the death, the glorious triumph, and the brilliant miracles of these holy Martyrs, did not sound in vain in Ferdinand's ears; he was like a war-horse ready for the day of battle, or an elephant excited by the sight of blood. He immediately resolved to receive the habit of the Friars Minor, that he might lead the same life these glorious victims had led, and like them receive the crown. "I will take their habit," he said, "and so will I, too, go to the fight."

O martyr of desire, O Antony, how great was thy zeal in seeking a martyr's death! Truly, though not slain by the sword of the executioner, thy glorious soul has not failed to win the palm of triumph. Happy soldier of Christ, whom the sword of the persecutor could not terrify, but only excite to stronger desire!

One day, while the servant of God was revolving in his mind how he could best carry out his project, some poor Friars Minor, who had settled in the neighbourhood of Coïmbra, came to the monastery to beg alms for Christ's poor. When he saw them

he could contain himself no longer ; he took them aside, revealed to them the longing of his heart, and entreated them most humbly to receive him as a Friar into their Order. Thus, that Francis might not alone pursue the career of preaching, the word of prophecy spoken by Isaias would be fulfilled, "I will clothe him with thy robe, and will strengthen him with thy girdle." On hearing this, the good Friars were filled with exceeding joy : they saw their fold enlarged, a goodly sheep entering the pasture, and the Church, by the merits of Francis, continuing to bring forth a glorious progeny. Having obtained, not without difficulty, the prelate's consent, they gladly returned on the day appointed, and clothed the servant of God in the habit of their Order.

He was now attired in a habit shaped like a cross, he who so ardently desired to be crucified for Jesus Christ ; he was now girded with a cord, he who wished, for the love of Christ, to be bound with the girdle of obedience. Courage, Antony, valiant soldier ! Bear the arms of Christ the invincible King ; bear His cross on that habit, by which the powers of the enemy shall be put to flight ; gird thyself with the cord, that thou mayest be bound with Christ to the yoke of obedience !

When Antony, the soldier of Christ, had taken the weapons of the heavenly army and

was preparing to follow his fellow-soldiers to the camp of holy poverty, one of the Canons, who loved him greatly, exclaimed in the bitterness of his heart : " Go, I tell you, go. You will perhaps become a saint." The man of God replied with the simplicity of the dove, and yet as beginning even then to feel the touch of a prophetic spirit : " When you hear that I am a saint, surely you will give thanks to God."

It is a fact that in this same Monastery of Holy Cross at Coïmbra, so I have been told by the Custodian of St. Jacques, the bed on which Antony slept in the dormitory has become an object of the greatest veneration ; and numberless miracles are obtained by the Faithful who invoke the Saint there. Moreover, after his death and solemn canonization, when the Queen of Portugal died in a distant part of her kingdom, St. Antony appeared to a pious Canon of this monastery, and, addressing him kindly, made known to him the death of the Queen, almost at the very time of its taking place, which announcement was not only useful to the Community, but also relieved it from innumerable anxieties.

It was, therefore, in this Monastery of the Holy Cross that Ferdinand first saw the habit of the Friars Minor, and it was there that, leaving the Canons, he joined the Society of these poor Friars.

CHAPTER IV

OF HIS CHANGE OF NAME, AND HOW HE WENT TO THE INFIDELS

As the Convent in which these good Friars dwelt was called after St. Antony, he desired, and asked permission, to change his name and to be called no longer Ferdinand, but Antony.

Rightly was he first named Ferdinand: for Ferdinand may be taken to signify fervent spikenard; fervent in his ardent longings for martyrdom, spikenard, by the good odour of his virtues. Again, Ferdinand can be taken to mean one who girds his loins with a cord, who loves those who are stripped of all, and who is a leader in Divine truth; for he girded his loins with a cord by the pure and chaste life he led, he loved to see new-comers strip themselves of all by abnegation and poverty; finally, he was a guide and leader by preaching the Divine truth.

Rightly, also, was he afterwards called Antony: for Antony may signify *ante-tonans*, "the first to thunder," since he, above all the Religious of his time and Order, proclaimed

the sublime doctrines of the truth. Antony may also mean "One who endures suffering," or who "speaks clearly;" he suffered, by mortifying the flesh, he taught clearly by preaching. The following meaning may also be discovered in this name: "Free merchant, earnest witness, weeping suppliant, useful follower;" he was a free merchant by his contempt of the world, an earnest witness by practising what he taught, a weeping suppliant by his fervent prayers, a useful follower by his imitation of Francis.

In his simplicity and profound humility, therefore, he wished to have his name changed. He hoped by an unknown name, to escape the frequent visits of those who sought to see him. Moreover, he gave a signal example of self-denial, by renouncing a name usually borne by the sons of kings and nobles in that country; imitating his Divine Master who called Himself the "Son of Man," when they called Him the "Christ, the Son of the Living God"; imitating also his master, Francis, who loved to call himself, openly, "the son of Peter Bernadone," when the people applauded and magnified him.

During the time that he dwelt with the Friars in this house, he formed himself to the practice of poverty, chastity, and obedience according to the Rule of the Friars Minor. Whatever he heard, he shut up in the little

closet of his heart that he might never forget it ; like a new vessel he drank in abundantly the dews of divine teaching with which he was, in his day, to refresh thirsting souls.

Very soon, remembering the intention which had led him to enter the Order, he asked and obtained permission to go amongst the infidels and preach publicly the truths of the Faith, offering himself as a victim, by their hands, to Christ who died for us on the altar of the cross. But the eternal wisdom of Christ, which "reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly," disposed otherwise : he was intended and reserved for greater things. He arrived, indeed, among the Saracens, but his efforts to obtain the much coveted palm of martyrdom were vain : he found it was impossible to realize his design ; God had decided otherwise. Brought down by a long and painful illness, he understood that he was not to succeed in his attempt, and resigned himself to the necessity of returning to a Christian land. Fastened as he was to the cross of penance with Christ crucified, did not he suffer continual martyrdom in his life with Christ, and in his death to the world ?

Seeing his project frustrated, he took his passage for Spain ; but his vessel, driven by contrary winds, landed him on the shores of Sicily. The General Chapter was then shortly to take place at Assisi ; and as soon as

he heard of it, Antony, though weakened and exhausted by sickness, resolved to attend it.

As soon as the Chapter was over, the Friars returned to their different convents. Then Blessed Antony humbly accosted Brother Gratian, Provincial of Romagna, earnestly entreating him, with the permission of the Father-General, to take him with him, and form him in the practice of religious discipline. He who wished to receive the fulness of grace, rightly placed himself under the direction of Brother Gratian.

As Blessed Antony begged for some solitary place where he might give himself up to silence and prayer, devotion and study, Brother Gratian sent him to the Hermitage of Monte Paolo. It was so ordained by Divine Wisdom, that by solitude he might be confirmed in humility, and by prayer and study he might lay up a store of choice seeds to sow broadcast, hereafter, by his preaching. There, in a retired cell, he gave himself up entirely to the service of God, arming himself against every temptation by rigorous austerity and sublime contemplation, and grounding his spirit in Divine love.

NOTE.—The four preceding chapters are found, as to the facts, in the *Legenda Prima* of the Portuguese, Italian, French, and Swiss Manuscripts, as well as in the *Vita auctore anonymo* (Julien de Spire), edited by the Bollandists; but they differ from it in form. Jean Rigauld has chiefly followed the second of these biographies, reproducing many of its expressions.

CHAPTER V

OF HIS MARVELLOUS HUMILITY, AND THE CONDESCENSION SHOWN TO THE SLIGHTEST EXPRESSION OF HIS WILL

HUMILITY, the guardian and the perfection of every virtue, so completely possessed the Man of God that even among the Friars Minor he wished to appear the most contemptible, the vilest, and the lowest of all.

Knowing that "he who carries treasure openly on the public way lays himself open to being robbed," he concealed with the greatest care the virtues and gifts which God had granted him. Although filled with the Spirit of Wisdom, he kept his learning so completely hidden from the Friars that they could perceive no sign of it save in a few rare and very short lectures given by him. Since "knowledge puffeth up" too often, he would rather pass among men as ignorant and uncultured than be inflated with pride or carried away by vain glory.

But humility is proved by humble actions; and no one should account himself humble

who tries to avoid humble employments. Therefore, Blessed Antony, as the humblest of men, assiduously sought out the humblest occupations.

Remembering that Christ deigned to humble Himself so far as to wash His disciples' feet, he washed the plates and other kitchen utensils, and also the feet of the Friars which he then devoutly kissed. In travelling, he tried as far as possible and as far as was fitting to give way in everything to his companion, knowing that the more one humbles oneself before men the more one accumulates grace before God. Even when made Superior, he appeared not to be so much a Superior as a companion: far from being elated by his dignity, he liked to be taken for one of the Friars, or rather for the lowest of them all. And because "he who exalts himself shall be humbled," and, as pride is followed by humiliation, so humility should be crowned with honour, therefore, Blessed Antony, who reputed himself as nothing before men, was exalted by the most signal favours from God. And as he had given proof of his humility in these four matters, viz., in concealing his learning, in working diligently in humble offices, in submitting himself to his travelling companion, and in humbling himself completely when in charge as Superior: in all these circumstances it pleased the Divine Omnipotence to crown

him with glory, as will be seen in the course of this history.

Thus, because his humility had made him hide his learning under a bushel, God would not permit so burning a light to remain hidden in such a manner, but that it should be placed upon a candlestick. And so it came to pass that Blessed Antony was sent by his Superiors with several other Friars to Forli to be ordained. At the time of the Ordination, the Minister of the place desired certain Friars of the Order of Preachers who were present, and the Friars Minor themselves, to address a few words of exhortation to the assembled Brothers. But all, by the will of God, excused themselves on the plea of want of preparation. Then, by a sudden inspiration, the Minister turned to Antony, whose learning was not suspected by any one, begging him earnestly and enjoining him with authority to address the Friars and to say whatever the Holy Spirit would deign to inspire.

Antony, like a true lover of humility, infinitely preferred the place of disciple to that of teacher; he protested, therefore, alleging his unfitness and want of preparation, doing all in his power to avoid what appeared to him an ambitious act, until he was forced to submit to the formal command laid upon him. And in truth it was marvellous that an unknown Religious, of whose learning the Friars themselves were unaware, should have

been so persistently compelled to preach !
But this was not of man, but of God.

He began, in the fear of God, with simple words, but enlightened by heavenly grace, and assisted by his memory, which served him in place of books, his language as he went on became so sublime, he explained so clearly the deep mysteries of Holy Scripture, he captivated the minds of his hearers with such overpowering eloquence, that it was evident to all that "a gracious tongue in a good man aboundeth." His marvellous address astonished his hearers, who were quite carried away by his eloquence, and exclaimed one to another, "Never man spoke like this man," and acknowledged that they had never heard a like discourse. He had "prepared his soul," therefore the Lord "governed his tongue"; what he had "learned without guile," he "communicated without envy"; he had "wished and understanding was given him; he called upon God and the Spirit of Wisdom came upon him." Again, "the mouth of the just meditated wisdom and his tongue spoke judgement."

Not long after, the thing came to the knowledge of the General, who forthwith obliged Antony to appear in public by appointing him to the office of preacher. Blessed is he who does not intrude himself into this office; who "takes not the honour upon himself, but is called of God,

as Aaron was." When we speak farther on of his wonderful preaching it will be seen how marvellous was the success of his ministry.

As Blessed Antony loved to be given the most humble employments, the Lord rewarded his humility by miracles. The following is a proof of this—it occurred while the Saint held the office of Guardian in the Province of Limousin. It was in Holy Week, at midnight, on the night of Holy Thursday. After Matins, which is sung at that hour in the Church of St. Pierre-du-Queyroix, in Limoges, Antony sowed the word of life amongst the crowd gathered round his pulpit. At the very same time the Friars Minor in their convent were chanting the Divine Office and the Guardian, St. Antony himself, was appointed to read one lesson. So that the Man of God was preaching in the Church of St. Pierre—at a great distance from the convent of the Friars—while they were reciting their Office. But when they came to the lesson which Blessed Antony was to read he appeared suddenly in the midst of the choir, began his lesson and read it through. All the Friars present were struck with astonishment and admiration, as they knew him to be absent, preaching in the town. The power of God caused him to be present at the same moment with his Brothers in choir, where he read the lesson, and in church with

the people amongst whom he scattered the seeds of the word of life. Albeit, he had kept silence in the church, where he was preaching to the people, for as long a time as it took to read the lesson in choir.

Thus, He who once willed that Blessed Ambrose should assist at the burial of Blessed Martin, in the City of Tours—yet remaining present in Milan—willed, in like manner, that Blessed Antony should appear in two places at once lest his absence should disturb the recitation of the Office. So it was that in those employments in which he had humbled himself it pleased God to exalt him.

Moreover, as has been stated, whether journeying or not, he always submitted himself to his companion, being mindful of the words of the Prophet : “ Lord, my heart is not lifted up, nor are my eyes lofty ; neither have I walked in great matters, nor in wonderful things above me, if I were not humbly minded.” Wherefore Christ, the teacher of humility, who cries out in the Gospel, “ Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart,” protected him and his companions in a wonderful manner from shame, scandal, and opprobrium.

This is what happened to him when he left Limousin, where he was Guardian, and was on his way to Italy. In passing through Provence, he and his companion came to a small village without having had any food,

though it was past the dinner hour. A certain poor woman, moved with compassion when she saw their poverty and found they were fasting, took them into her house to have some food. This woman, like another Martha, solicitous about serving, set bread and wine on the table and ran to borrow a wineglass from her neighbour. But God, who intended "with the temptation to make issue," permitted that after drawing the wine from the cask she left the tap open by accident so that all the rest ran out on to the floor of the cellar. On the other hand, Blessed Antony's companion took hold of the wineglass so awkwardly that he broke it against the table—the upper half, which remained whole, rolling one way and the stem the other. Towards the end of the repast the woman went back to the cellar to offer the Friars some more wine, and on entering found nearly all the wine spilt on the ground. Distracted with grief, disconsolate, beside herself, she returned to announce with many lamentations the consequence of her fatal distraction. Then, Blessed Antony, touched by her grief, covered his face with his hands and bent over the table, according to the words of the Apostle : "I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the understanding," and while the woman anxiously awaited the end and the result of his prayer a marvellous thing

suddenly took place : the goblet which was at one end of the table came and placed itself upon the stem which was at the other end. On seeing this the astonished hostess seized the wineglass and shook it roughly, acknowledging that this could only have been done by the power of prayer. Believing that the same power that had mended the glass was quite able to restore the wine she had lost, she hurried with rapid steps to the cellar. She was not disappointed of her hope : she found the cask, which had before been half empty, so full that the wine was up to the brim, sparkling and bubbling as if it were new. It *was* new, in truth, since God had just created it to spare His humble servant, Antony, from shame and reproach and to make known by so striking a miracle the power of his prayer. But no sooner did the Saint find his petition granted than he made haste to leave the village ; like a true disciple of humility he fled from the place where he would have been held in honour and most deservedly praised and extolled.

Again, because in his quality of Superior he never put himself forward, but sought rather to be taken for a simple subject, God made him to be a faithful Guardian, watchful in guarding his flock from the teeth of wolves or the bite of serpents.

As an instance of this, one day a young man named Peter, a native of Limoges, who

had been received into the Order by Blessed Antony, was violently assaulted by the tempter and made up his mind to leave the convent and give up the religious life. This was revealed to Antony by an interior light ; he sent for the young man, and after inquiring concerning his temptation he opened the novice's mouth with his hands and breathing into it, said : "Receive the Holy Ghost." From that moment, marvellous to relate, every temptation vanished ; and, indeed, as this Brother acknowledged later, he lived the rest of his life in Religion without feeling the slightest return of the evil one's assaults.

O truly humble man ! He concealed his learning, and God called him to the office of preacher ; he loved humble employments, and the Lord glorified him in his work ; he sought to lower himself beneath his companions, and his miracles raised him above them all ; he was not elated when Superior, and his vigilance preserved his flock from the teeth of the wolves.

CHAPTER VI

OF HIS GREAT POVERTY, AND THE WONDERFUL MANNER IN WHICH GOD PROVIDED FOR HIS WANTS

ANTONY, that admirable poor man, grounded from the very first in the school of poverty and in the spirit of poverty, abounded more and more in his love of the most exalted poverty. He tried with all the power of his soul to become conformed to this sublime poverty, and often recalled to his mind the destitution of Christ and of His Blessed Mother.

When preaching to the Friars, and to the people also, on poverty, he frequently repeated those words of the Gospel: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Or again, as may be seen in the first of his *Operis Dominicalis*, that word of Ecclesiasticus x. 10: "There is not a more wicked thing than to love money." In the same sermon he says, also, that "riches are by our Lord justly compared

to thorns, because, like thorns, they hinder, they prick and draw blood from those who possess them." Therefore, he took nothing with him when travelling, but, delighting in poverty, he traversed countries and provinces in the most complete destitution as a pilgrim and stranger upon earth. With the Apostle, he knew how to suffer want, and he knew also how to glory in the most abject poverty. He was not ignorant of the truth that the Lord "heareth the prayer of the poor," that He "giveth judgement unto the poor," and that to the poor He has promised the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed Son, who, conforming himself in all things to the poverty of Francis, taught poverty by his words and established it invincibly in the world by the example of his life of poverty !

But the Lord is the defence of the poor and his refuge in tribulation ; therefore, this Sovereign Provider, upon whom the eyes of all wait, and "who giveth them their meat in due season," provided so abundantly all he needed that nothing was ever wanting to him or to those who were with him. From his love of poverty and zeal for the salvation of souls it even happened once that having been invited to dinner as a poor man and being given poison, it in nowise injured him.

Again, whilst in the Diocese of Limoges, at Brive, where he founded in person the first Convent of Friars Minor, it happened

one day that the cook found he had nothing whatever wherewith to make a dinner for the Friars. Antony told this to a lady who was devoted to him and to the Friars, begging her to give them some cabbages and leeks out of her garden. It was pouring with rain, nevertheless the lady called her maid and, speaking kindly, asked her to go to the garden to fetch what was wanted for the Friars' dinner. The servant objected strongly, urging the violence of the storm, but, induced by her mistress's entreaties, she went to the garden, gathered all that was needed for the Friars' kitchen, and took it out to their convent, which was at a considerable distance from the town. And yet, though the rain had never ceased for a single instant, not a drop fell on her or on her clothes. She returned to her mistress with her dress perfectly dry, and told how the rain had never touched her, though it fell incessantly.

Pierre de Brive, a son of the lady in question, and Canon of Noblac, often related this miracle, which he had heard from his mother, in glad praise of the Saint.

But, if God provided for him so wonderfully in little things, how much more in things of greater importance! For those who become poor for Christ's sake are confident that God will not allow them to suffer want: the truth of this is clearly shown by the miracle related above, of wine

spilt on the ground and returned to the cask, as also of the broken glass miraculously mended. But the mercy of God not only provided for the necessities of Antony, the poor man of Jesus, but likewise protected him most marvellously from danger.

One day he was invited to dinner, in an Italian province, by certain heretics. He accepted the invitation, in the hope of withdrawing them from error and confirming them in the true Faith, after the example of our Lord, who for a similar reason ate with publicans and sinners. But, as an evil conscience lends itself to evil thoughts, these heretics, who had frequently been confounded by him, both by his sermons and in controversy, conceived a malicious design against him, and placed before him a dish full of deadly poison.

Enlightened by the Holy Spirit who searcheth out hidden things, Blessed Antony reproved them for their evil intention in words full of gentleness and charity : the heretics, lying, after the example of the Devil, the father of lies, answered that in what they had done they had simply wanted to test the truth of that passage of the Gospel : "If they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." They urged him therefore to eat of that dish, promising that if he felt no hurt from it they would embrace for ever the Faith of the Gospel ;

but that if he feared to partake of it, they would conclude the words of the Gospel to be false.

Then Antony made the sign of the Cross over the dish, and taking it into his hands, said to them : " I do this not to tempt God, but to show my constant and earnest zeal for your salvation, and the triumph of the Faith." He then ate the whole contents of the poisoned dish without feeling the slightest harm. On seeing which, the heretics were converted to the Catholic Faith.

Let pious souls consider how dear to God the poverty of Antony must have been, since He provided so mercifully for his necessities, and preserved him so marvellously from danger.

CHAPTER VII

OF HIS SUBLIME PRAYER, AND HOW GOD GRANTED HIM ALL HE ASKED

BLESSED Antony had learned, doubtless from his master, Francis, that assiduous prayer is above all things necessary for a Religious. For Blessed Francis declared that no one could make progress in the service of God unless he raised his soul to Heaven by fervent prayer ; therefore Antony frequently exercised himself in meditation and prayer, exclaiming with the Apostle, "I will pray with the spirit, I will pray with the understanding also."

Now, this is what happened while he was Custodian of Limousin. One night, after Compline, he was making his meditation as usual : some of the Friars who had just left the chapel saw, by the light of the moon, a number of men attacking and devastating a large cornfield, ripe for harvest. This field, which lay close to the convent, belonged to a friend of the Religious, and the malefactors

appeared to be ruining it completely and tearing up the corn by the roots. Grieved at the wrong done to their benefactor, the Friars hastened to the Man of God who was watching through the night in prayer in the chapel, and told him, clamorously and with tears, of the misfortune that had befallen this devoted friend of their Order. The Man of God answered : "Leave it alone, Brothers, leave it alone, and continue your prayers ; for this is only a trick of your enemy to disturb your night's rest, and interrupt your prayer. Hold it for certain that no harm shall befall our benefactor, nor shall anything be destroyed in his field."

The Friars obeyed the words of the Blessed Father, and waited for morning to see the result. As soon as it was daylight, they examined the field on every side, and found that it had not been touched, no damage had been done to it. Whereby they understood the Devil's artifice, and conceived a still greater veneration for the piety and prayers of the Saint.

But Blessed Antony knew that he who ceases not from good works ceases not from prayer, and gave himself up, therefore, to good and holy employments, so that the enemy should never find him idle. One winter that he spent in Padua, busied in compiling his Sermons on the Saints, by the express desire of the Cardinal of Ostia (when

Lent began he devoted this holy season to the work of preaching and hearing confessions), the enemy of the human race sought from the very first to prevent the good he was about to do. One night, when the blessed man was resting after the fatigues of his apostolic work, he seized him by the throat and wrung it so hard that he was almost strangled. Antony at once invoked the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the bottom of his heart, praying her who had been his Mistress in childhood to continue her protection of him : and then, opening his eyes, he saw his cell full of the most brilliant light, which being intolerable to the enemy of all light, he departed in confusion.

Thus he was delivered from the power of the evil one, by her who had guided his first steps in the path of wisdom. Nor can we wonder that the Devil did his best to strangle Antony, since that holy man never ceased, with the secret weeding-hoe of confession and the fish-hook of preaching, to snatch from him the souls he had gained through sin.

But since "prayer is good with fasting"—because as fasting heals the diseases of the body, so prayer heals those of the soul—Blessed Antony, that he might be free from disease of both body and soul, fasted on bread and water, chastising his body and bringing it into subjection, lest when he

had preached to others he himself should be a castaway.

He wore an iron chain next his skin, part of which is still preserved as a relic in the Friars' Convent at Limoges. So great was the austerity by which he subjected his body to the spirit, that often his trembling feet were scarcely able to support him. Therefore, his blessed spirit, being but slightly burdened by the weight of the flesh, raised itself on high, so that, "all his conversation was in Heaven," and, by reason of this, Almighty God from on high saw and granted his desires. It was revealed to many sinners, guilty of various grievous crimes, that by presenting themselves to Antony and asking his prayers they would obtain pardon.

It happened once that the Man of God fell sick in a Monastery of Black Monks in the Diocese of Limoges. A certain monk who was deputed to attend upon him was a prey to violent temptations of the flesh, which temptations were made known to the Saint by revelation. And as by contact with a saint one becomes saintly, one day when this monk was with him, the Man of God reproved him mildly, told him of the temptation, which he had carefully concealed in his heart, and of the different forms it took, and then persuaded him by loving entreaties to put on an under-tunic which the Man of God had just taken off. Marvellous to relate,

scarcely had the tunic worn by Blessed Antony touched the body of the tempted monk, than all temptation ceased ; and by touching the body the soul was healed. This same Religious has frequently assured the Friars that from the day he put on Blessed Antony's tunic he had never felt the slightest temptation. So that by waiting on the Man of God in his bodily sickness he merited to be healed by him of his spiritual malady.

Moreover, as he was fervent in prayer, assiduous in good works, austere in fasting and abstinence, so likewise was he zealous in preaching, and powerful in working miracles. The following is, amongst others, a remarkable miracle worked by him during his sojourn in Spain. A young man, forgetful of the honour which by God's command he owed his parents, and impiously transgressing the Commandment of God, in a passion with his mother struck her so violently with his foot as to throw her down. Soon after, moved to compunction during a sermon, and smitten by the sword of the Divine Word from the mouth of Antony, he made known his sin in Confession with great sorrow of heart and many tears. Seeing his compunction, the Man of God enjoined him amongst other things to beg pardon most humbly of his mother. When the young man asked his mother's forgiveness, as

Antony had desired him, she answered : “ *I might forgive you, but I think that God cannot forgive you for so great a crime !* ” On hearing these words, overcome with grief, he went into his room and chopped off the foot which had struck his mother, with a hatchet. The blood flowed copiously, and the groans of the young man and the cries of his mother when she found what had happened drew all the neighbourhood round the house.

At that moment the Man of God happened to be passing ; and when the cause of the tumult was explained to him, he remembered that some one had accused himself in Confession of having struck his mother, and entered the house. As soon as he saw and recognized the young man, he asked for the foot that had been cut off, and taking it into his hands he held it to the place from which it had been cut, trusting in His power who “ *healeth the broken of heart, and bindeth up their bruises.* ” Immediately, the foot joined itself on to the rest of the body, and the young man was relieved at once of his pain and of the wound. Thus were shown the efficacy of contrition and confession in the young man, and also the power of Antony’s prayer.

The all-prevailing power of his prayer, as seen in the repairing of the broken goblet and the restoring of the spilt wine to the

cask, may be taken as a proof of what has been stated above : of his great humility, and the condescension God was pleased to show to his least desire.

O truly admirable man, whose flesh is subdued by penance, whose mind is raised to Heaven, and whose prayers are heard and granted at will ; whose tunic heals a wounded soul, and whose intercession restores a wounded limb !

CHAPTER VIII

OF HIS RENOWNED PREACHING, AND HOW
HE HAD THE GIFT OF MIRACLES

CAREFUL to discharge faithfully the office of preaching which had been laid upon him by the direct providence of God, Antony traversed villages, towns, and cities, scattering everywhere the seed of the Word of Life and spreading in all directions the Gospel net. As the trumpet of the Law of Moses, the echo of the Prophets, the voice of the Apostles, the herald of the Gospel, and the messenger of the truths of Salvation, he "opened his mouth in the midst of the Church, and God filled him with the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding." So great was the fame of his preaching that the Sovereign Pontiff gave him the name of the "Ark of the Covenant."

Learned men were astonished to find that so acute a spirit, so eloquent an orator, could measure out his words with such admirable discretion. He distributed so

exactly to each of his hearers, according to their capacity, the learning which abounded in himself, that young and old, little and great, were alike struck by the darts of truth. So well did he season his words with the salt of discretion, according to the state and condition of those whom he addressed—he “salted his sacrifice” of preaching so thoroughly—that his words drew back to the truth those who had fallen into error, roused sinners to repentance, excited the good to do still better, so that no one failed to receive benefit.

At Rimini, he converted a great number of heretics to the Christian Faith, and amongst them a noted heresiarch, named Bononillo, who had been for thirty years blinded by the pestilential mists of error. The Saint restored him to the light of truth and established him in devout obedience to the laws of the Church until his death.

We must not omit to mention, in praise of Antony's preaching, what occurred at Arles, in Provence, in presence of all the Friars assembled at a Provincial Chapter. St. Antony was preaching, in sweet and earnest words, on the title over the cross: “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews,” when his Blessed Father, Francis—who was alive at that time but in a distant part of Italy—appeared at the door of the Chapter-room, raised in the air, with his arms stretched out

in the form of a cross blessing the Friars : thus bearing testimony to the truth of Antony's words.

We may well believe that as it pleased Almighty God that His holy Bishop, St. Frontus, should assist at the interment of the glorious St. Martha, the hostess of Christ, to offer her this tribute of his veneration, so He willed also that His standard-bearer, Francis, should bear witness by his presence to the truths preached by St. Antony, especially those concerning the Cross of Christ—of which Francis was pre-eminently the upholder and follower—and should give it his sanction. It seems only right and fitting that Francis should bear this testimony to Antony, who, from his first admission into the Order, had so earnestly desired, and still continued to desire, the sufferings of the Cross, even at the very time he was unfolding and making known the hidden mysteries of the Passion.

This miracle was affirmed by Friar Monaldo, a man of tried virtue and an eye-witness, and was, moreover, confirmed by our holy Father, St. Francis, himself, who openly attested the truth of it.

In preaching, Antony frequently foretold to the people things that would happen during his sermon. One day, when he was at St. Junien, in the Diocese of Limoges, the church was not large enough to hold the

immense concourse of people assembled to hear him preach, so he betook himself to an open square in the town with the crowd of his hearers. A platform had been hurriedly erected, from which he began his discourse in the following words: "I know that presently, during the sermon, the enemy will attempt to molest you; but do not fear, for no one will be injured by his attempt." Soon after, indeed, the platform broke down suddenly, causing great excitement, but without the slightest injury to any one. This miracle raised the universal veneration for the Man of God to a still higher degree, as it proved that he had the spirit of prophecy, and when the platform had been set up again the people listened with even greater reverence and attention to the Saint's sermon.

Certain Friars, worthy of belief, related to me the following:—One day, when the Saint was preaching at a Synod at Bourges, turning suddenly to the Archbishop, he said with much fervour and vehemence: "I speak to thee, mitre-bearer!" He then began to reproach the prelate for certain vices concealed in his conscience, speaking so severely and quoting such clear passages from Holy Scripture in condemnation of the same, that presently the Archbishop was seized with compunction and moved to tears and to a devotion hitherto unfelt. As soon as the Synod was at an end, he took Antony aside

and humbly manifested to him the wounds of his conscience. From that time he was more faithful to God and a devoted friend to the Friars, and gave himself up diligently to the duties of his office.

If the preaching of the Saint was occasionally despised by men gifted with reason, God made use of irrational creatures to honour it. Certain heretics in the neighbourhood of Padua openly ridiculed his words ; Antony approached the river which was near, and said to the heretics in the hearing of all the people : " Since you show yourselves unworthy to hear the Word of God, behold, I turn to the fishes, that your unbelief may be put to shame." He then began to preach to the fishes with great fervour and to remind them of all the benefits God had bestowed upon them : how He had created them and had given them clear, limpid water to live in ; what freedom He had granted them, and how He fed them without any labour on their part. At these words, the fish began to assemble in crowds ; they approached the Saint, raised their heads out of the water, looking attentively at him, and even opened their mouths. As long as it pleased him to speak, they listened with as much attention as if they had been gifted with reason, nor would they depart until he had given them his blessing. For He who made the birds attentive to the preaching of the most

holy Father Francis, made the fish, in like manner, attentive to that of his disciple, Antony.

In a small treatise on his miracles I found another marvellous fact, recorded with the preceding, which must not be passed over in silence. An obstinate and crafty heretic refused, in spite of the exhortations of Blessed Antony, to believe in the Real Presence of the Body of our Lord under the species of bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Altar. Although the testimony of the Truth, who cannot deceive and who said : "This is My Body," ought to be enough for any faithful and humble soul, this man would not yield to any proof. Utterly devoid of faith, and trusting only to the evidence of his senses, he refused to admit the truth of the Sacrament simply because he could see no change take place in the species. Touched by his incredulity, and with his usual zeal for the salvation of souls, the Blessed Father said to him : "If the horse you so often ride should adore the Body of Christ really present under the species of bread, would you believe in the truth of the Sacrament of our Lord as taught by the Church?" Impelled by his unbelief and malice, the heretic answered : "I will keep my horse for two days without any food whatever ; on the third day I will bring him into the public square and offer him a peck

of oats, while you on the other side hold the wafer which, according to you, contains the Body of our Saviour. If the hungry animal leaves the oats, to prostrate before the Body of Christ, I will confess with heart and mouth the reality of the Sacrament."

The Saint agreed to the heretic's proposal, but added that if after three days the horse were not to bow down before the Body of Christ, it would in no way affect the truth of the Sacrament, but ought rather to be imputed to his own sinfulness.

The horse was kept without food, as had been arranged, and on the third day was led into the public square. On one side he was offered the oats, and on the other Blessed Antony stood, bearing reverently in the ciborium the price of our redemption, that is to say, the Body of our Lord. In the presence of an immense crowd assembled on the spot, the horse, left free to go wherever it chose, walked deliberately up to the Body of Christ, bent its knees reverently before the Saint who bore It, and remained kneeling until the Saint gave it permission to rise. The sight of this striking miracle delivered the heretic from the darkness of error. How men ought to blush for their want of devotion to so great a Sacrament when even a senseless and irrational animal shows so much reverence for It! Antony, therefore, went about "preaching the Gospel every-

where ; the Lord working with him, and confirming the word with signs that followed."

One day, when he had gathered the people together for a sermon, the multitude was so great that the church was not large enough to contain it, so he assembled them in a vast plain, called the *Creux des Arènes*, where the temples of the heathen gods once stood, and where the people could sit down and listen in peace to the Divine Word. As soon as this immense crowd was collected, the Man of God began to scatter the seed of the Word of God. But just as the people were listening most diligently, suddenly the thunder began to peal, the lightning to flash across the clouds, and the rain to fall. Afraid of the tempest and heavy rain, the people were beginning to break up—all were overcome by fear—but the Man of God tranquillized them, saying quietly : "Fear not ; do not move nor cease listening to the Divine Word, for I trust in Him who never suffers us to trust in vain that the rain will not touch you." The people obeyed the words of the Man of God, and the Almighty, who "bindeth up the rain in His clouds," withheld the rain from falling on their assembly, though all around them it poured in torrents. As the Saint had foretold, not a drop of rain fell on the people, who listened with avidity to the Divine teaching. The

Word of God was falling like a spiritual shower upon the hearts of the Faithful, therefore God protected them in a wondrous manner from the storms of earth. He who once caused the dew and rain to wet the fleece of Gideon whilst the earth around remained dry, at the prayer of His faithful Antony prevented the pouring rain from falling on the place where the people were listening to the sermon, and thus manifested the power of the Word of God and also the might of Antony's prayer. 'The Man of God continued his sermon as long as he wished, and the people heard him with the greatest attention. When it was ended, and the people discovered that everywhere around the earth was drenched while the place where they had been was perfectly dry, they glorified the marvellous power of God, who is wonderful in His saints.

When I entered the Order, many Friars who had been present at this sermon were still living ; they even told on what subject the Saint was preaching. Their testimony is worthy of entire belief, for they bore witness to what they had actually seen and heard.

The results produced by the preaching of Antony in different parts of the world may be judged of by the enormous fruits it brought forth within the space of a single year and in one single city. For when it pleased the Lord

that the life of His faithful Antony should draw to its close, one year before his happy departure from this world—that is to say in the year of our Lord twelve hundred and thirty—at the General Chapter of Assisi at which the translation of the relics of the Blessed Father Francis took place. the Man of God was discharged from all government of the Friars and given entire liberty to preach wherever he chose. Being at the same time charged by the Cardinal of Ostia to compile his sermons on the Saints, as he had previously compiled his Sunday sermons, he chose, for carrying out this work, the city of Padua where he had formerly been so well received.

There he gave himself up assiduously to the task of preaching. And so anxious were the people to hear him, and so great were the crowds that collected, that daily stations had to be erected in all the churches. Very soon, however, the churches were insufficient to contain them and they were obliged to assemble in the vast meadows and plains which surround the city : there the clergy as well as the people flocked to hear him ; they came from all the surrounding towns and villages, and every one tried to secure a place beforehand wherever the sermon was to be preached. Shopkeepers shut their shops and would on no account sell anything whatever until the sermon was

over. Then might be seen the most deadly enemies reconciled, prisoners restored to liberty, usury abolished, debts and ransoms paid, and women of evil life giving up their sin.

About the year 1292, a very old man told one of the Friars that he had known Blessed Antony. "I was a robber by profession," he said, "I belonged to a gang of a dozen brigands; we lived in the forest and plundered all the passers-by. But having heard the fame of Blessed Antony's preaching, we resolved to go in disguise, the whole twelve of us, on a certain day to hear his sermon, for we could not believe in all that was said about the power of his words. They compared him to a flaming torch and called him a second Elias. One evening, therefore, when he was to preach, we went to hear him, and no sooner had his burning words sounded in our ears than we began to feel bitter remorse and compunction for our sins and evil deeds, and when the good Father had heard our confessions, one after another, and had given a suitable penance to each, he forbade us positively to return to our former sinful life, promising to those who renounced it eternal life, and to those who returned to it, unspeakable sufferings. Some," added the old man, "resumed their criminal life, and very soon perished, as the Saint had foretold, by a most terrible death ;

but those who remained faithful slept in peace in the Lord. As for myself, the Saint had imposed on me the penance of going twelve times in pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles, and I am now on my way from Rome for the twelfth time." This account was given to the Friar by the old man with many tears as they walked: he hoped for the joys of eternal life according to the Saint's promise, having abandoned the evil life he had once so miserably led.

These facts, and other similar ones, spread the fame of the Saint's preaching far and wide: consequently, the devotion of the people to him was so great that they counted themselves happy if they could but touch him as he passed. Sometimes he would have been crushed by the crowd in going out or coming in if he had not been protected by a strong escort of young men. Such was the veneration of the people that whoever could contrive to cut off a piece of his habit rejoiced in the conviction that he possessed an invaluable relic. Again, so great was their desire to listen to his gentle, devout and holy words, that amongst thirty thousand men, and even more, not the slightest sound could be heard when the servant of God was speaking. When his body was translated, in the presence of Brother Bonaventure—at that time Minister-General, but afterwards made Cardinal-Bishop of Albano by

Pope Gregory X—his tongue, which had spoken in every place the word of truth, was seen to be as fair and fresh, and ruddy, as if his body had only just been buried. On perceiving this, Brother Bonaventure showed it with great joy to all who were present, exclaiming that the tongue so miraculously preserved was a proof of how faithfully the Man of God had preached the immortal truth.

Blessed preacher! who taught by word and example, without respect of persons; whose preaching was confirmed by the apparition of Francis; who made irrational animals listen to him; who prevented the clouds from pouring down on his auditors the rain that fell abundantly elsewhere; who softened the most hardened hearts; and whose tongue, after death, bore witness to the truth.

CHAPTER IX

OF HIS HAPPY DEATH, AND INSCRIPTION IN THE CATALOGUE OF SAINTS

BLESSED ANTONY, ready to pass out of this world unto the Father, and having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, had a foreknowledge of his approaching death. That he knew beforehand of his death, and of the glory he would have in Heaven, is evident from the following. He was one day contemplating, from a hill, the city of Padua and the plain on which it stands, when he began, in the hearing of his companion, to rejoice exceedingly in spirit, and to break forth in praise of that city, declaring that very soon it would be crowned with honour. By these words he alluded to his own death and happy passing to Heaven : for in truth it is the precious treasure of his body that attracts such a multitude of visitors, and works the frequent and striking miracles for which Padua is famous.

As the harvest time drew near and the

people were all busy at work, Antony interrupted his course of sermons for a time and retired from the tumult of the city.

He betook himself to a neighbouring village named Cam-Pietro, where the Friars had a convent, there to refresh his spirit and give himself up to Divine contemplation. Since Peter, the bearer of the Keys of Heaven, was so soon to open its gates to him, it was fitting that before going to the Father, he should rest his spirit in the Field of Peter—Cam-Pietro. There, a cell was constructed for him on a height that he might be nearer to Heaven, he whose soul was so soon to take its place in the highest Heaven amongst the angelic spirits.

Whilst, therefore, giving himself up to prayer and contemplation, and uniting himself in sublime ecstasy with the angelic choirs in this solitude, as he was going down to the Friars at the dinner hour one day, he was suddenly seized with the violent pain of acute illness. The sickness increasing more and more, he was unwilling to be a burden on that little Community, and asked to be taken back to Padua. With much regret the Friars placed him in a carriage, and with tears and lamentations allowed their holy Father to depart. At the entrance to the town he was met by a Friar, who was on his way to visit the holy man, and who persuaded him not to go to the convent, which was

situated in the very centre of the city, and where the noise in the streets would deprive him of rest, but to allow himself to be taken to the residence of the Friars who ministered to the Poor Ladies of St. Clare. The Man of God arrived there exhausted in body but courageous in spirit, and rested for a time ; but his sickness increasing, it soon became apparent that his blessed and glorious end was approaching.

Having made his Confession and received the Sacred Body of the Lord in Holy Communion, that this Holy Viaticum might accompany him on his way, he began with great devotion the hymn to our Blessed Lady, *O gloriosa Domina*, invoking the assistance of the Queen who is exalted above the stars, that she who is the resplendent Gate of Heaven, would herself give him entrance there.

O happy and devout servant of the Blessed Virgin ! who was taught first in her Church, wast delivered by her in after life from the power of the demon, and art now about to be admitted by her to the eternal rewards of Heaven !

Then raising his eyes he looked fixedly, for some time, on high. As he continued to gaze steadfastly towards Heaven, the Friars who surrounded him asked him what he saw. He answered : "I see my Lord." Happy servant of Christ, who whilst yet in the flesh

merited to see the Lord, and could say : " Now shall I die with joy, because I have seen Thy face." Truly he had " seen the Lord face to face, and his soul had been saved." He, indeed, might feel certain of the Kingdom of Heaven whom the Lord of the Feast Himself invited to the Feast.

When he had devoutly received Extreme Unction from the hands of the Friars, and sung the Penitential Psalms, as if already united with the citizens of Heaven, like one quietly falling asleep, he slept in the Lord ; and his loving, holy soul quitted the body, and, conducted by the good Jesus, entered into the joy of his Lord.

He died on a Friday : being thus conformed to Christ suffering, on the day of his deliverance—since he could not attain thereto by martyrdom, during the night of this life. He quitted this land of exile for the celestial mansions, in the year of our Lord 1231. O how bitter was the grief of the Friars who were present at his death ! How great the lamentation of the Poor Ladies when they heard the fatal news ! For if it is well to rejoice at the entrance of Antony into Heaven, it is also well to weep for Antony who converted sinners from their evil ways.

Nevertheless, the Friars resolved not to make known the death of the Saint at once ; knowing the devotion of the Faithful to the Man of God, they feared that the people

might come in crowds so as to oppress and hinder them. It pleased God, however, to reveal by a miracle what the Friars would have kept secret.

No one, except those who were present, knew of his death, when suddenly groups of little innocent children began to pass along the streets of the town, crying out: "The holy father is dead; St. Antony is dead!" So, He who was pleased that children's voices should sound His praises when He was entering the earthly Jerusalem, willed also that the voices of children should make known the decease of Blessed Antony when he entered the Jerusalem above.

The whole city was moved at the cry of the children, and an immense crowd quickly collected outside the convent in which the sacred body lay. The convent was near that quarter of the city called the "Head of the Bridge" (*Capite Pontis*), the inhabitants of which armed themselves and prepared to resist any attempt to remove the body. But as the Saint had expressed a wish to be buried in the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, near which the convent of his Friars was situated, the rest of the city, as if it had been one man, opposed the people of the Head of the Bridge.

In the middle of the night a miraculous event occurred, which I may not pass over in silence. At midnight, those who wanted

to see the body of the Saint, thrice broke open the convent doors, with loud outcries and clamour ; but, stupefied and struck with blindness, they could not once get inside though the doors were all open.

During the four days that the contention lasted, the Saint's body remained unburied but carefully guarded by armed men. Finally, on the fourth day the Bishop of the place decided that the Saint was to be buried with the Friars of the Church of the Blessed Virgin. But it was to be feared that the inhabitants of the Head of the Bridge would attempt further opposition ; it was probable that if the body of the Saint were taken across the stone bridge, they would stop the funeral procession, when they saw the sacred body being carried through their territory against their will. Therefore the Podestà had a bridge of boats built across the river : but the people of the Head of the Bridge threw themselves upon it directly, and furiously broke it to pieces ; hazarding everything, even their very lives, rather than allow the body to be taken from them. The Friars at the sight of this, and fearing a general rising of the whole city, began to call upon God to allay the tumult. And God, who had permitted the disturbance for the greater glory of His Saint and to show that the veneration of the people was not "to a coffin, but to a pearl of great price," Himself

quieted the tumult, and so changed the dispositions of the citizens that, when the Podestà gave the order, no further opposition was made by the people of the suburb.

When the tumult had subsided and the people had calmed down, the bishop and all his clergy, the Podestà and all the city magistrates, as well as a numerous assemblage of the faithful bearing torches, formed in procession, and with hymns and psalms carried the sacred body to the Friars' Convent at the Church of the Blessed Virgin. Blessed Antony had been then five days dead ; and yet, notwithstanding the severe heat of summer, not the slightest odour of death was perceptible ; on the contrary, the sacred body exhaled an aromatic perfume and an odour of sweet ointments, as if to attract all others to run in his footsteps.

His sacred body was therefore interred reverently in the Church of the Blessed Virgin. It was right and fitting that he should there be laid to rest : as a little child he had begun his studies in a church of this Blessed Virgin ; the powerful protection of this Mother had prevented the devil from strangling him while he was preaching and hearing confessions ; on his death-bed he had invoked this Blessed Lady, begging her to open to him the gates of Paradise. It was well that his body should repose here on earth in a church of the Blessed Virgin, in

union with whom his soul now rejoiced in Heaven.

Miracles began to be worked from that very day. Any sick persons who were able to touch the Saint's tomb were instantly healed ; those who could not get to it for the crowd, were healed outside before all the people. All this served to excite the devotion of the multitude to an indescribable degree: the inhabitants of Tête-du-Pont were amongst the first to come ; they prostrated before the tomb, bare-foot, and confessing their fault with such deep humility and contrition that all present were moved to compassion and devotion.

As unheard-of miracles were multiplied, the bishop and his clergy, the Religious of different convents, teachers with their schools, the various Arts' and Trades' Companies, organized processions to his tomb on appointed days, bearing tapers of an extraordinary size, which were left to burn outside in the Square when it was found impossible to penetrate to the inside of the church.

The rumour of all these marvels was spread far and wide, and drew the inhabitants of distant cities and countries to visit the tomb of the Saint. All were unanimous in petitioning that the process of his Canonization should be actively taken in hand, and deputies of rank and fame were appointed for this great object. On arriving at the Curia,

they were received by the Sovereign Pontiff with the greatest kindness, and the Pope himself, as also the Cardinals, were transported and amazed on hearing of so many and such great miracles.

The Bishop of Padua, the Benedictine Prior, and the Dominican Prior of the same city, were appointed to inquire into the miracles. After a most careful examination the deputies returned with joy, bringing the depositions of eye-witnesses: they were also the bearers of letters from two Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, at that time Legates in those parts, testifying to what they knew with certainty of Blessed Antony.

The Commission, charged to make a further examination into the reported miracles, soon met; the conclusions it came to were favourable: the miracles were so incontestably proved, that to deny them would have been to shut one's eyes to the truth. All that now remained to be done was for the Sovereign Pontiff to pronounce the Canonization, when some of the Cardinals endeavoured to hinder the proceedings, on the pretence that so important a matter ought not to be carried through hastily; one, especially, amongst them, was most determined in his opposition.

As this occasioned some delay in the process, a heavenly vision was sent to him to remove his objections. In his sleep, he

saw the Sovereign Pontiff in the act of consecrating a church, at which august ceremony he, with other Cardinals, was assisting. When, in the course of the ceremony, the altar was about to be consecrated, the Sovereign Pontiff inquired where the relics were that ought to be deposited there according to custom, but no relics could be found. The Holy Father then perceiving a coffin that had been newly brought in, desired them to take the relics from that: the assistants answered that those were not relics, but on being ordered to open the coffin, they raised the lid, and discovered relics so precious that they fought to see which could be the first to secure them. On awaking, the Cardinal was told that the deputation from Padua was at his door: he instantly understood that the dream had been sent him by God to foretell the Canonization of St. Antony, and from that time he became a most zealous defender and promoter of his cause.

On the day appointed for the solemnity, the Chief Pastor of the Church, His Holiness Pope Gregory IX, took possession of his throne with all the pomp and ceremony customary on such occasions, surrounded by the illustrious College of Cardinals and by a crowd of Prelates from all parts of the world, at that time in the Curia. First, an account was read aloud in their midst of the miracles,

which were approved by all present. Then the Sovereign Pontiff, raising his hands to Heaven and invoking with fervour the Name of the Blessed Trinity, inscribed the most Blessed Priest of Christ, Antony, in the Catalogue of the Saints, appointing for his Feast the day of his death, that is to say the Ides of June. He also granted the remission of one year of penance to all the Faithful who, with true contrition after Confession, should visit his tomb on the day of his Feast and the eight following days, as may be seen with further details in the Bull of his Canonization. This solemnity took place at Spoleto, on the Feast of Pentecost, in the year of our Lord 1232, and the sixth year of the Pontificate of the Holy Father, Pope Gregory IX.

Rejoice, therefore, happy Padua, in the treasure thou possessest, in those relics which were declared by a heavenly vision worthy of being deposited in the sacred altar stone. Rejoice, also, Blessed Antony, who, treading under foot this world, didst set forth on the path of Religious Perfection in the school of Blessed Austin; who then, to secure the palm of martyrdom, didst assume the habit and gird thyself with the cord of the poor Francis; who by poverty, humility, and fervent prayer, with the preaching of the truth, didst attain to a holy death; to whom Christ appeared in thy last moments and

conducted thee to reign for ever in the Kingdom of Heaven: pray for us thy children exiled here below that we also may be brought to the heavenly mansions by Christ, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER X

MIRACLES WROUGHT AFTER THE DEATH OF BLESSED ANTONY

To the glory of Almighty God, I annex to this little work certain miracles which were approved and written down after the death of St. Antony. I have classed them under different headings, that they may be found more easily by those who search for them. Therefore, the miracles collected after the death of the Man of God are here divided into four: first, the cure of divers infirmities; secondly, the healing of blind, deaf, and dumb; thirdly, his saving the lives of those who were shipwrecked, or in danger of drowning; fourthly, the fate of those who despised the Saint.

I. THE CURE OF DIVERS INFIRMITIES.—
After his death, the Man of God worked many striking miracles, which I desire to include in an abridged form in this little work, relating, to the best of my ability, those that were approved before the Sovereign

Pontiff. Amongst these were nineteen lame persons healed, five paralytic patients restored to health, as many hump-backed relieved of their deformity, two cured of epilepsy, two of fever, and two dead persons raised to life. Besides these, he has worked other miracles so numerous that the Friars of Padua left off collecting them. But in the year of our Lord 1293 Brother Peter Raymund of Saint-Romain, Lector in that city, and later on Provincial of Aquitaine, a man greatly devoted to the Saint, collected a certain number of them which he caused to be solemnly verified by the Bishop in the presence of trustworthy witnesses. Some of these I will relate.

A certain Friar of the Province of Romagna, named Cambius, suffered so terribly from hernia that neither medical science nor the steel instrument he was forced to wear could give him any relief. He desired, therefore, to consult a celebrated specialist at Bologna, who he hoped might be able to tell him of some remedy; and happening to arrive in Padua shortly before the Feast of St. Antony, a Religious named Francis persuaded him to stay there a few days. Now he was suffering so much from the hernia that in passing through Vicentia a few days before, his companion being taken ill, he was quite unable to make his bed or to do anything for him. The

Religious of the convent in Vicentia were astonished to see how he neglected his sick companion, until he showed them how terribly afflicted he was: on seeing which, they considered him well excused.

Being then in Padua, on the Feast of Blessed Antony he saw the number of sick persons who approached his tomb and there recovered their health, and felt an increase of devotion as he began to hope with confidence for a similar cure for himself. But as the dense mass of people prevented the possibility of his placing himself between the pillars of the tomb, he stretched out his right hand and touched it, pressing his hand firmly against it. Then laying the hand that had touched the Saint's tomb on his own body, he immediately felt relief. With increased confidence in Blessed Antony, he once more touched the tomb and laid his hand on the place of the hernia, when suddenly the wound, which was of considerable size, was so completely closed and consolidated, that, to use Brother Cambius's own expression, his forehead itself was not harder than this wound so miraculously healed. Afterwards, leaping and dancing, he exclaimed: "A short time ago I could not have done that: but now I can leap and dance, thanks to the assistance of Blessed Antony!" Full of gratitude for so great a blessing, he obtained his incorpora-

tion in that Province in order to serve the Saint with greater fervour.

The same Friar Peter records in that same year the following miracle: A lady in the diocese of Forli had for ten years been afflicted with a malignant and infectious kind of tumour the size of one's fist, or larger, which had struck its roots so firmly into her skull that no medical skill could do anything for her. Many able physicians had been consulted, but in vain. Hearing of the miracles worked by Blessed Antony, the fame of which was spread over the whole of Italy, she began to hope for his assistance and to feel herself inflamed with a strong devotion and love for him. In the ardour of her devotion, she made a vow to encircle the tomb of the Saint with a silver chain if he would restore her to health.

The following night as she slept, Blessed Antony appeared to her, and without giving her the slightest pain but rather a feeling of ease and pleasure, he seemed to cut the tumour into four parts, and thus to cure her completely; and she dreamt that she spoke of it to every one. The dream passed away; but not so the perfect cure it had foreshown. For, very soon after, the horrible tumour opened out into four parts, as had been shown to the sufferer, and discharged much offensive matter, after which her head was perfectly well and sound, without even

the slightest mark of what had been. The lady went to Padua, proclaiming the praises of St. Antony, and kept her vow by surrounding his tomb with a silver chain.

2. CURE OF THE BLIND, DEAF AND DUMB.—Amongst the miracles approved before the Sovereign Pontiff were six blind persons to whom sight was given, three deaf whose ears were opened, and three dumb whose tongues were loosed. Amongst those recorded by the same Friar Peter whilst he was Lector at Padua, mention is also made of curing the deaf and dumb.

A Friar named Bernardin, a native of Parma, had for two months lost the power of speech. His infirmity had reduced him to such a state of weakness that he was unable even to blow out a candle held close in front of his mouth. The most skilful physicians of Lombardy had tried in vain to give him any relief: his throat had been burnt nine times with a red-hot iron, and his head once, but without any good result; there was no sign of improvement: on the contrary, the more remedies were tried by the physicians the quicker was the progress of the disease, so that the Friar was in imminent danger of suffocation. Recalling to mind the miracles worked by the holy Confessor of Christ, Antony, whose Feast was near, he wrote—since he could not speak—begging permission of the Provincial

to go to Padua. As the state of the Friar was known to all, he, fearing on the one hand, but on the other having the most entire confidence in the power of Blessed Antony, gave the required permission.

On arriving in Padua, the Friar prayed devoutly at the tomb of the Saint. He presently began to cough and to spit, yet remaining dumb. Then, as he continued to pray earnestly, surrounded by the Friars and crowds of the Faithful attracted to the church by the Feast and the numerous miracles, he suddenly vomited a quantity of offensive matter, and immediately completely recovered his health and his speech. Breaking forth in praise of the Saint, he commenced in a loud voice the Antiphon of the Blessed Virgin, *Salve Regina*, which was taken up by the Minister and the Lector, who hastened to the spot on hearing of the miracle, and by all the rest of the Friars in transports of joy. Brother Bernardin himself, entirely cured, sang joyfully, in thanksgiving for the miracle which had been performed before the eyes of all.

Friar Peter also records the following miracle which took place the same year, while he was Lector at Padua :—

In a convent of nuns at Padua, a servant twenty-five years of age, well known in the city and the neighbourhood, had been born deaf and dumb. It was beyond doubt that

he was dumb, for his tongue was so short that it scarcely came further than his throat; moreover this fragment of flesh was twisted like a screw, and looked all dried up and shrivelled. Many ladies worthy of credit, who had seen it, affirmed this fact before the Bishop of Padua. It was likewise certain that he was deaf, because he could not hear bells even when they were rung close to his ears; though he saw them quite well, he never moved his head or gave any sign that he heard any sound. His companions declared this upon oath with their hand upon the Gospel, in presence of the Bishop.

He was twice admonished in a vision to have recourse to Blessed Antony; but being exceedingly ignorant and very dull, he looked for the Blessed Man in the house first, and then all over the town. At last, after a third apparition similar to the former two, he made his way to Blessed Antony's Church and there prayed with the utmost devotion all day and through the night, that he might be healed. About the ninth hour a brilliant light shone suddenly round about him; he fell into a profuse perspiration and was seized with acute pain in his head and limbs; in a word, his tongue had all at once grown to its proper size and he was able to speak and hear. Thereupon he opened his mouth and cried out, "Blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ and Blessed Antony!"

That the miracle might be made more evident, he was enabled to say some sentences quite distinctly with his newly formed tongue, though until then he had no knowledge of language. The few words he said were directly inspired by God ; for without having learnt anything from man, he spoke, to the astonishment of all who knew him to have been born deaf and dumb. The nuns, whose servant he was, used to say, " If Blessed Antony could cure our deaf and dumb man, his power would be great indeed ! " Now, therefore, they magnified the Saint who had opened his ears and loosed his tongue.

This fresh miracle attracted crowds of the Faithful of both sexes ; and they all recommended the young man, who was called Peter, to take from henceforth the name of Antony.

The following miracle was told me as most certainly true, by Friar Peter of Pomerada, who had heard it related at the convent at Padua by the Lector, then in office, who affirmed solemnly that he had been an eye-witness of this fact which I cannot pass over in silence :—

A man who lived in the neighbourhood of Padua was desirous of finding out certain secret things by consulting spirits. One night he took his place within a magic circle, with a certain clerk who knew how to

summon the spirits by the aid of magic spells. As soon as they had entered the circle and the said clerk had begun his incantations, the demons suddenly appeared with terrible howlings and noise. The man, trembling and affrighted, was unable to answer these evil spirits, whereupon they fell upon him like wild beasts and tore out his tongue and his eyes ; in this mutilated condition he had to be led back to his house. When he opened his mouth there was no sign of any tongue ; and where once were his eyes there was nothing but a wide, deep cavity.

The unhappy man lived for some time in this miserable condition. His mind was consumed with grief, because he could neither confess his sin nor discover any means of relief, when there recurred to his mind the marvels that God was pleased to operate through his servant Antony.

He began to implore the assistance of the Blessed Man with great fervour and caused himself to be taken to his church, where he spent many whole days and nights in prayer. One day, whilst the choir of Religious were singing *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini* in the Mass, and the priest was elevating the Sacred Host, his eyes were miraculously restored to him, and he began to show the people present, by joyful signs and movements of the head, that he could

see. The crowd, excited by this prodigy, gathered round him, entreating that God, who had restored his sight to this man by the merits and invocation of Blessed Antony, would also give him back his tongue, that he might be able freely to tell the people of the marvels wrought by His servant Antony. Then, whilst the choir of Religious were singing the *Agnus Dei*, as they finished *dona nobis pacem*, He who openeth the eyes of the blind and giveth speech to the dumb, restored to him his tongue and the power of speech, and he, opening his mouth, cried out saying: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who has given me back my sight, my tongue, and my speech, by the merits of Blessed Antony!"

3. HOW HE SAVED THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO WERE SHIPWRECKED, AND OF OTHERS IN DANGER OF DROWNING.—In looking through the account of miracles solemnly approved by the Sovereign Pontiff, we find instances of several persons in danger of drowning who were saved by our Saint.

Thus, a woman who had fallen into the water, called on St. Antony, and whereas those who drew her out of the river were wet through, she herself and her clothes were perfectly dry.

Some sailors who were battling desperately against a tempest at sea, after making their confession and dedicating themselves to St.

Antony, were miraculously brought to a port of safety, directed thither by a radiant light. Nor can we wonder at St. Antony appearing as a ray of light, who all his life shone as a star from Heaven. It is because of this miracle that these words are sung in the Lauds Hymn of the Saint's Office: "He was a sign of salvation to shipwrecked mariners, whom he guided and led by a ray of light." In the year mentioned above, Friar Peter, of whom we have spoken, and who was Lector at Padua, related a somewhat similar miracle.

An infant five months old, named Thomazino, whose parents live close by the Church of St. Antony, was imprudently left by his mother near a vessel full of water. As he was playing with this water, like any other child of his age, he saw his own reflection in it, and trying, no doubt, to catch hold of it, he fell head foremost into the vessel with his head down and his feet up. Being so young he could not help himself and was very quickly drowned. When the mother came in from her work soon after and saw the child's feet floating on the top of the water, she flew to the vessel with loud cries and lamentations and drew out her poor little one, weeping bitterly, and as it had been some time dead she found it was quite cold and stiff. Seeing this, she mourned and lamented so vehemently that the entire neighbourhood was in commotion. A crowd

soon collected and amongst them one of the Friars Minor and some workmen engaged on repairs in the Church of Blessed Antony. At the sight of the little child so unmistakably dead and the inconsolable grief of the mother, they went away full of sorrow and compassion.

But the mother, in the midst of her affliction, remembered the wonderful miracles worked by Blessed Antony, and began to implore him to raise her son to life again; promising that if he granted her petition she would give as much corn to the poor as would equal the weight of her child. From the evening till midnight the child lay dead, but the mother went on invoking the Saint and renewing her vow, when suddenly, marvellous to relate, the dead child came to life restored to perfect health.

The same Friar Peter Raymund assured me, as a truth, that by the intervention of Blessed Antony a woman was saved from drowning herself in despair.

There was a certain woman in Portugal, who was frequently vexed by a devil. One day her husband in a fit of anger reproached her with being possessed. Unable to bear such an affront, she went out intending to drown herself; but passing by the Church of the Friars Minor on her way to the river, and that day happening to be the Feast of Blessed Antony, she thought she would go

in and commend herself to God before her death. She went in and whilst she was praying, fell asleep, and saw in a vision St. Antony, who said to her : " Rise, woman, and keep this note carefully ; it will preserve you from being troubled by the devil." She rose up immediately, and wonderful to relate found in her hand a piece of parchment on which were inscribed these words : " Behold, the Lion of the Tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and break the seals thereof."

Knowing quite well that she had not brought this note, and yet finding in her hand that which Blessed Antony had charged her to keep carefully, she trusted in the Saint's promise and returned home. From that time as long as she kept the mysterious parchment she was no longer troubled by the demon. Her husband, perceiving this, asked what she had done to be delivered from the infernal enemy ; when he learned the particulars he made known the miracle and related it to the King of Portugal, who insisted on seeing the parchment, and when once he had it refused to give it up.

The devil immediately began to trouble the woman as before. Her husband was in despair at finding it impossible to recover the parchment from the King, but he obtained a copy of it through the Friars Minor ; and this copy, like the original, preserved his

wife in future from all molestation of the Evil One.

4. WHAT BEFELL THOSE WHO DISHONOURED THE SAINT.—A certain soldier, a born heretic, hearing the Saint's miracles spoken of at table, took upon himself to ridicule them; and dashing the glass he had in his hand with violence to the ground, he cried out: "If Antony can prevent this glass from breaking, I will believe in his sanctity." The glass struck the ground and was not broken. On seeing this miracle, the heretic renounced his errors and embraced the Faith of Christ.

No wonder Antony could prevent a glass from breaking now he is glorified in Heaven, since he mended one that was broken while he was yet alive on earth. In remembrance of this miracle, these words are sung in the Hymn of Lauds:

Hæreticum lux fidei
Signo purgat dum jacitur
Ab alto vasis vitrei
Fragilitas nec frangitur.

A cleric, who used to scoff at miracle-seeking, was afflicted with a serious sickness. After making a vow to Blessed Antony he was cured, and became a zealous defender of his holiness, which personal experience had thus taught him to recognize.

It is in remembrance of this prodigy that the above-mentioned hymn has the words :

Irrisor lucis gratiæ
Signorum languet clericus,
Post votum surgens gloriæ
Sancti fit testis publicus.

Thus the miracles wrought at the tomb of the Man of God, being so striking and numerous, clearly prove to what a high place of glory he has been raised in Heaven who is honoured on earth by such frequent and remarkable wonders.

Deign to receive, most holy Father Antony, the humble work of thy poor brother ; and, in the presence of the Father of Lights, show thyself the advocate of thy brethren dwelling in this wretched land of exile. In union with Francis, the father of the poor, obtain for us the grace to fulfil the vows we have made and to reach thy companionship and that of holy Father Francis. Which favour may He, the Father of the Poor, Christ the Holy King, through their united intercession grant us, Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth world without end. Amen.

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